

R E M A R K S

O N

*Dr. HORSLEY's*

Ordination-Sermon, &c.



R. E. M. A.

DR. HORSLEY

Ordination Sermon, &c.

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# REMARKS

ON

*Dr. HORSLEY's*

ORDINATION-SERMON:

IN A LETTER TO THE

Lord Bishop of Gloucester.

BY

GILBERT WAKEFIELD, B. A.

*And late Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge.*

*R*

Εσσι δ'εν ολβω και τοδ' εκ ορθως εκου.

Ευψυχιας δοκησις· οιομεσθα γαρ

Τον ευτυχην παλ' επιστασθαι καλως.

*Euripides.*

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M.DCC.LXXXVIII.



R E M A R K S

Dr. HORSLER'S

ORDINATION-SERMON:



Lord Bishop of

GILBERT WAKEFIELD, B. A.

Master of Arts of the College, Cambridge

With the addition of a new edition of the

L O N D O N

Sold by J. Denton, No. 27, Holborn.

M.DCC.LXXXVIII.



MY LORD,

**D**R. HORSLEY'S Sermon, preached before your Lordship at a *public Ordination of Priests and Deacons*, and published by your Command, lately came into my Hands. You undoubtedly designed by this Measure to profess a general Concurrence in the Sentiments of the Preacher, and to give additional Currency to his Reputation with the Public by the Stamp of your Approbation. I was always disposed to regard your Lordship as an elegant and judicious Scholar; and have frequently heard you in the Schools and from the Pulpit with Delight; so that I could not but feel a mingled Sensation of Surprise and Sorrow at seeing your Name prescribed as the Passport to such a Miscellany of irrational, antisciptural, and dangerous Opinions, promulgated in so high a Tone, with such an Air of Confidence and Authority. Let us review, my Lord, the

Sermon together, and make a few Observations as we go along. You may, perhaps, on more deliberate Consideration, see Cause to repent the Zeal of your Patronage on this Occasion, and be more cautious in future how you sanction such Effusions of a visionary Imagination, such *swelling Words* of Vanity, by the Authority of your Name.

Amidst a considerable Number of gratuitous Assertions in the *five* first Pages of the Doctor's Discourse, the following Observation appears to me particularly exceptionable :

“ While they called themselves by the  
 “ Name of Christ, they required not that the  
 “ Jew should recognize the Maker of the  
 “ World, the Jehovah of his Fathers, in the  
 “ Carpenter's reputed Son: nor would they  
 “ incur the Ridicule of the Græcian Schools,  
 “ by maintaining the Necessity of an Atonement for forsaken and repented Sins, and by  
 “ holding high the Efficacy of the Redeemer's  
 “ Sacrifice.”\*

Such is *your* Account, *Dr. Horsley*, of the *Apostle's* Declarations upon this Point. Let  
 us

\* Page 2nd, at the Bottom.

us hear what Account the *Apostle* himself has given us.

*For the Jews require a Sign, and the Greeks seek after Wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified; unto the Jews a Stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks Foolishness.\**

So then, according to *St. Paul*, what disgusted and scandalised the *Jews*, who expected a glorious conquering *Messiah* — a *Messiah* that should not DIE, but abide for ever† — was a meek and lowly Saviour, EXPIRING ON A CROSS.—No such Thing, says the *Bishop* of *St. David's*: this was their Error; — they would not allow (strange Blindness and monstrous Perversity!) this simple Truth, — that a Carpenter's reputed Son was, forsooth, the MAKER OF THE WORLD, the JEHOVAH of their Fathers!

My Lord, you see the alternative. *Hunc-cine an hunc sequeris?* Whom will you follow? BAAL or JEHOVAH, — Dr. HORSLEY or St. PAUL?

Your Preacher, my Lord, is as palpably and outrageously erroneous in the Reason which

A 4

he

\* 1 Cor. i. 22, 23.

† John xii. 34.



he assigns for the Rejection of the Gospel by the *Greeks* : i. e. their Denial of *the Necessity of an Atonement for forsaken and repented Sins*, and of *the Efficacy of the Redeemer's Sacrifice*. You and I can give a much better Account of this Matter. We know that the Disciples of the *Gracian Schools* were enamoured of metaphysical Subtleties, logical Disquisitions, and airy Speculation. This was *their Delusion*. Truth was acceptable to *them* through no other Medium than that of abstract Argumentation. But the *Demonstration of Christianity* did not rest upon the THEORETICAL DEDUCTIONS of refined Reason. It's Evidences were neither more nor less than the Attestation of Witnesses, credible altogether in themselves and corroborated by *Miracles*, to this plain and single FACT,—*the RESURRECTION of JESUS OF NAZARETH from the DEAD*.

Go now, and compare the *Chaff* with the *Wheat* !—In the mean Time, my Lord, I prefer, with your Leave and that of our Preacher, the unsophisticated Divinity of two simple *Greeks* to the *theological Reveries* of this *Christian*

*tian* Prelate. Their Sentiments may be seen below.\*

The preceding Observations, which have the clear Suffrage of Scripture in their Favour, and some *Simplicity* to recommend them, will abundantly expose a Variety of strange Assumptions in the four succeeding Pages and other Parts of this Discourse; and render, I hope, a particular Detail unnecessary. I wish to be as brief as possible; and pass on, therefore, to the Examination of an *Axiom* laid down, with sufficient Decision, in the Beginning of the *tenth* Page.

“ The Apostles were, by infinite Degrees, “ the best informed of all Philosophers :” says our learned Polemic.

This Position, if it were *true*, would invalidate the CAPITAL ARGUMENT for the Truth of *Christianity* — an Argument perpetually insisted on by the sacred Writers; namely, that the

\* *Ἰκανὲ γὰρ ἀποδείξει ἀκρῶς ἀμαρτημάτων, ἢ διορθώσις. Schol. in Aristoph. Plut. 779.*

Προσαγορευοῦσι δὲ καὶ Μελικὸν τὸν Δία, εὐμειλικτὸν οὐκ αὖ τοῖς ἐξ ἀδικίας μισῶμενοις· ἡ δὲ γὰρ ἀδιαλλακτικῶς ἐκοιτᾷ αὐτοῦς. *Phornutus de Nat. Deor.*

the Gospel was not indebted to the *Information* of *Philosophers* for it's Establishment, but to *plain unlettered\* Men*, proclaiming the *Intelligence* of their *Senses*, and exhibiting, in attendant *Miracles*, the *Power of God*,† as a complete *Demonstration* of their *Veracity*.

But the Position, my Lord, is unquestionably and absolutely FALSE. Read the *Lives of Christ* and the *Apostles*, as recorded by the *four Evangelists* : read the *History* of the first *Preaching of Christianity*, as related in the *Acts of the Apostles* : produce me, if you can, but a SINGLE PROOF that the *Apostles* were possessed of ONE Truth in *Science* or *Philosophy*, after our Lord's *Ascension*, which they were unacquainted with *before*, and I will take Shame and Ignominy to myself, as ignorant and prejudiced in the Extreme. They preached what they had SEEN, and HEARD, and FELT.† — This was EXPERIENCE, not PHILOSOPHY. — They needed no *Philosophy* — they had none. The Position is, indeed, grossly untrue ; — subversive of the fundamental Support of Revelation ;

\* Acts iv. 13.

† See, among other Texts, 1 Cor. i. 27. ii. 5. 2 Cor. iv. 7.

† 1 John i. 1.



velation ;—loudly contradicted by the *Lives* of the *Apostles*, by the positive and express *Declarations* of *Scripture*, by the whole Spirit and Œconomy of the Gospel. Nay, so jealous was the divine Projector, and Conductor, of his own Supremacy in this grand Undertaking, — of any Intermixture of *human* Influence, that he would not admit the Services of the learned Apostle of the *Gentiles*, till the *Christian* Revelation had been *openly proclaimed* and *decisively authenticated* by *Fishermen* and *Publicans*, rude in Speech and weak in Knowledge. — And yet shall *Dr. Horsley* be bold enough to affirm, that the *Apostles* were, by INFINITE DEGREES, the BEST INFORMED of all PHILOSOPHERS ! — My Lord, I feel myself impelled by my Love and Reverence of *Christianity* to interfere on this Occasion, and to reprobate such a solemn Paradox, so unspeakably absurd in itself and so flagrantly injurious to the Cause of Revelation, with all the Vehemence of Censure.

What our *Divine* has advanced in his *twelfth* and *thirteenth* Pages upon the Utility of *human Learning* has so much my Approbation,

tion, as to make me lament that he did not wholly confine his Efforts to the Illustration and Enforcement of this Topic on the gaping *Catechumens*. There was no need, I will maintain, of *Learning* to the *first Publishers* of our Religion: *Facts* were THEIR *Propositions*, and *Miracles* THEIR *Proofs*. But *our Hopes*, in these later Ages, rest upon the *written Records* of those Transactions. In Proportion, therefore, to *our Acquaintance* with *History*, to our Capacity to estimate it's *Credibility*, to our Knowledge of the *human Mind*, to our Acquaintance with *human Languages*, to our Sobriety and Strength of *Judgement*, to the Fidelity of our *Memory*, the Comprehensiveness of our *Understandings*, and the Promptness of our *Eloquence*; — in Proportion, I say, to the Excellence of our *intellectual Endowments*, co-operating with that essential Principle, SINGLENESSE of HEART, — will be *our Ability* to discover, and explain, and illustrate, and recommend, the *genuine Doctrines* of the evangelical Dispensation.

After

After some very questionable Insinuations respecting the *present Existence* of a *divine Commission* for an Ordination to the Ministry, our Author\* enlarges again, with infinite Complacency, upon the prodigious Acquirements of the *plain Men*† of *Nazareth*, in Terms of Exaggeration so supremely ridiculous, as almost make it impossible for a candid Man to suppose him serious. “The *Apostles* and primitive Teachers,” says he, “were PROFOUND METAPHYSICIANS; the BEST of MORALISTS; WELL-INFORMED HISTORIANS; ACCURATE LOGICIANS; and EXCELLENT in a peculiar Strain of ELOQUENCE.” — I can affirm with great Honesty and Seriousness, that I never read in the whole Course of my Life a more ludicrous Specimen of pompous Inanity, — a Declaration more extravagantly romantic, — more ridiculously contemptible. That any Person can have perused with Attention the Scriptures of the *New-Testament*, and have finished his Meditations in them with such Impressions and Sentiments as *these*, is to me, I own, perfectly



fectly incomprehensible. *Others*, perhaps, may see no *Singularity* in this Case : they especially of larger Capacities, the *Anaks* in Literature, who are so fortunate as to possess a more eminent Portion than their Neighbours of those *Talents* and that *Erudition*, with which the *first Evangelists* were, it seems, so wonderfully gifted.

Your admired Preacher, my Lord, tells us, for the second Time,\* that the Knowledge of *Christ crucified* consisted in understanding “ the “ Sufferings of the Messiah to be the Means “ appointed by God for Man’s Deliverance “ from Sin and Damnation.” The *Proof* of this Proposition, if it were produced, would not, I think, be distinguishable for it’s *Conciseness* and *Simplicity*.† And it grieves me exceedingly, I must confess, that any *Protestant* should entertain such strange Notions of the *Christian* Revelation : yet is it some Consolation to see them entertained by one, who appears in other Respects, as I have endeavoured to

\* Page 19.

† According to the Maxim of the Poet :

Ἀπλὸς ὁ μύθος τῆς ἀληθείας ἐστίν.

to shew, to have *studied* the Scriptures with such indifferent Success. *His* Example at least is no Proof of the Advantages of Learning in the Study of the Scriptures.

My Lord, I am not petulant, or I might go on and expose that Affectation of superior Discernment conspicuous in the *Appendix*; which pretends to discover an *entire* Correspondence where so much Exactness was not intended, and certainly cannot be made out. But I have no ill Humours to gratify, and no Time to spare from more agreeable Employment: and therefore conclude myself,

My Lord,

With great Respect for your Talents,

Your Lordship's humble Servant,

GILBERT WAKEFIELD.

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